



BENJAMIN LOZANO 2017-08-31

## ECONOMY OF THE WAR MACHINE (PART I OF IV)

ECONOFICTION CAPITAL, DELEUZE, DELEUZE/GUATTARI, DROMOCRACY, FINANCE, WAR MACHINE

### Part I. Introduction to an Economy of the War Machine

Did you know that in Chapter 9 of *A Thousand Plateaus* Deleuze & Guattari outline an ordinal concept of value aligned with, in continuation of, and subsidiary to that which is developed throughout the heterodox economic project that is Deleuze's oeuvre? Or that in Chapter 1 (Introduction: Rhizome) D&G outline three models of economy, argue for advancement of the third model over the other two; and then in Chapter 12 (Treatise On Nomadology –the War Machine) elaborate first a sketch –part history, part non-fiction, at times approaching science fiction– of what an actualization of this third model might involve, and second an itemization of some issues to address when attempting to move forward its notion? Chapter 9 (Micropolitics & Segmentarity), then –or rather the concept of ordinal value outlined in Chapter 9– serves as the ontological plateau linking the introduction of the model of economy outlined in Chapter 1 to the development and prospective application of its notion in Chapter 12.

If you've spent time reading some *TP* but didn't know this, it's understandable why. Already in the opening passages of Chapter 1 the reader encounters a foreign but wholly-formed, fully-operational conceptual machine just whizzing right along (This can cause a thin layer of subtle anxiety to immediately coat a panoply of ambiguous emotions in the reader: it's a first feeling comparable to that surreptitious uneasiness convoked when opening a door connecting a familiar, quiet room, where one has long-been residing in a kind of equilibrium, or steady state, a room absent any discernable human sounds from within or without, to now an new and unfamiliar adjacent room. A profound anxiety infuses such experience: there is that brief glimpse of a moment as we reach for the door, grab its handle, and now open the door –and as we oscillate back and forth on the cusp of a single moment in time, we are not actually moving at all yet all possibility of motion surrounds us; that *singularity* of a moment when we *will be* realizing, *are* realizing, *now* realize, and *have been* realizing that we find ourselves stepping into a new, expansive, much larger room whose blueprint resists immediate cognitive mapping (at this moment we are unable to, as we say, 'get our bearings'). We step into this new room to see that it's chocked-full of people, most of whom we do not know, all of whom are seemingly amidst unapologetically loud and lively discussions; their conversations are already en media res (how will I ever be capable of intervening, entering into a discussion? With whom will I discourse?); people are socializing (how will I ever regain the confidence

I suddenly realize I lack to carry on social intercourse? –am I even capable of social intercourse?); and at that, they appear to be having a good time (will I have a good time? Will I be the only one who is not having a good time? Will it be clear to the others that I'm not having a good time –will I perhaps ruin another's good time? –will they resent me for this? ...–Oh, I hate this party!)).[1]

Straight away in Chapter 1 the reader is inundated by a set of alien concepts used by D&G to construct a fluid, analytically-aparallel morphology of the distribution of flows? "*What* flows? Flows of *what*?" A long answer involves elaboration on the assertion, "the distribution of flows comprising an object –any object, whether small or large, simple or complex." A shorter answer is, "well, that depends...." A shorter-than-long but longer-than-short answer is "flows of capital or cash flows, or monetary flows, more generally" –which means our object will be "economics". This is the answer whose topic we will choose.

Let us open up to Chapter 1 to observe this morphology of flows.

D&G ostensibly spend much of *TP*'s opening Chapter itemizing the manner of flows which distribute themselves in the actualization, or progressive differentiation of a book. But there's also a bit more to it than this. D&G are using their Introduction to preliminarily familiarize their reader with a core constitutive concept, which is by far the most important concept for understanding the whole of Deleuze's project. This is the concept of the multiplicity.

While D&G are saying here, "yes, '[t]he two of us wrote [our last book] *Anti-Oedipus*', and yes, we wrote this book, *A Thousand Plateaus*, as well; the flip side is that 'each of us was already several, [and so] there was already quite a crowd' (–"Oh I see what you're doing there", the reader thinks; "very clever...very, very, (un)clever: each of you are objects qua individual authors, but you're also assemblages of authors as well, i.e. the object of this book, like any book, is a transitory meeting ground for what you, the authors, have read, ideas to which you've been exposed, ideas with various dates and speeds which have formally and informally influenced you; so that the signifiers "Deleuze" and "Guattari" of course denote objects –objects as authors. But you're also assembled varieties of authors, who in turn are assembled varieties of authors, and so on."). This is no doubt true. However, while in Chapter 1 D&G are both in fact and ostensibly talking about a book, the flows composing a book –that '[a] book has neither object nor subject; it is made of variously formed matters, and very different dates and speeds',[2] it's important to observe that rather than identifying the object of "book", or author as "object", D&G could have just as easily invoked the signifier "self", or "subject", or for that matter "financial asset", "finance", or "economic system" –which is to say they could have invoked any putative object whatsoever.

Why? As D&G note, if we are attempting to think an object, we must be willing to think what it becomes, what it was, is, and will be.[3] If we are attempting to think the becoming of an object, we must be capable of thinking the object as a heterogeneous mess of different *attractors* and their *affects*, *intensive* and *extensive properties* (including processes as properties), as well as the *phase singularities* around which these elements and their relations are shuffled, reshuffled, and again. So if we are thinking an object as its singularities and collection of morphogenetic properties, then we are thinking the object –which could be any object– as a multiplicity. D&G clarify their commitment to this approach at the outset of Ch.1, when they say:

'In a book, *as in all things*, there are lines of articulation or segmentarity, strata, and territories; but also lines of flight, movements or deterritorialization and destratification. Comparative rates of flow on these lines produce phenomena of relative slowness or viscosity, or, on the contrary, of acceleration and rupture. All this, lines and measurable speeds, constitutes an assemblage.[4]

Ok, fine. By page 3 of Ch. 1 the reader is now realizing she will be stepping out of that quiet boxed-in room, with whose contents she is relatively familiar, and is going to step, is stepping, and has now stepped into a new, much larger, utterly-foreign room: it is an n-dimensional and open-ended room, an expansive non-Euclidean room, a room of flux and friction and foreign forces, a room 'of lines and speeds', of aperiodic oscillations, comparative rates and rhythms of continuously alternating flows –it is the room of deterministic chaos, also known as the room of *becoming*.[5]

"Ok, great", the reader might now say, "I *think* I've been down a similar philosophical road before: becoming, heterogeneity, and all that –it's called 'post-structuralism', right?)[6] So go ahead D&G, and tell me more: but please try to do so without confusing me with counterintuitive assertions, and especially without introducing more foreign concepts."

For good reasons this reader's request is impossible to satisfy. Deleuze, throughout his oeuvre is constantly giving rigorous, technically-proficient, deep philosophical transformation to mathematical and scientific concepts, and is now doing as much with Guattari in *TP*. From mathematics, we will see technical treatments of Euclidean and non-Euclidean geometries, topology, differential calculus, group theory, and fractals. From science, we will see technical treatments of natural studies of symmetry, morphogenesis, theoretical biology, physics, and especially and above all a benevolent synthesis of nonlinear dynamics and chaos theory. (Our reader must know that for shorthand purposes, in this essay, we will always denote this collective aforementioned set of conceptual fields with the simple term "DST" (dynamical systems theory), taking the broadest possible purview of its hyper-interdisciplinary synthetic method.) Without a working understanding of the endemic concepts of these mathematic and scientific fields of inquiry, one will, perhaps unfortunately, have to learn them from D&G at the same time that one is working to understand their philosophical transformation, conceptual reformulation, and subsequent project-specific application.

Can this be done? Admittedly it's not the easiest task in the world (note: this may better explain why it is the case, if it is the case, that our own reader didn't know that there's an economic concept of ordinal value in Chapter 9). But that's at least one reason

why this essay has been written. And our position here will be this: If we're capable of preventing our anxiety about what we don't know from preventing us from learning about what we don't but should know, with a little effort we will understand D&G's radical inaugural attempt to reconceptualize the project of economics: this includes their proposal for a minor science of political finance, whose intention is to move us towards an economic mode of nomadic distribution, an economy of a war machine –or in a word, *dromocracy*.

So to begin with, we will combine the previous block quote with now the following statement by D&G.... :

'One side of the machinic assemblage faces the strata, which doubtless makes it a kind of organism, or signifying totality, or determination attributable to a subject: it also has a side facing a body without organs, which is continually dismantling the organism, causing asignifying particles or pure intensities to pass or circulate and attributing to itself subjects that it leaves with nothing more than a name as the trace of an intensity.[7]

...and we will see that we now have before us, already by page 4, enough of the base elements of the whole Deleuzian ontology – often found in a more technical but perhaps less accessible form in some of Deleuze's earlier works (e.g. *Difference & Repetition*, *The Logic of Sense*)– to both carry the “box” with us while yet thinking-outside it. What is this “box”? What is the “thinking” that will take place “outside it”? Namely, the “box” is that which contains so many previous economic ideologies –proto-capitalism, quasi-capitalism, socialism, and communism– and by “thinking outside the box” we mean D&G's itemization of the conditions of possibility for a radical alternative model of economy, the proposition of an economy of the war machine.

So then let us repeat and propose: In Chapter 1 of *TP*, D&G outline for us a wholly novel model of economy, a refashioned image of political economic thought, radically different from that model of thought shared in common by proponents of bubble-gum capitalism, tobacco-pipe socialism, and leather-cap communism alike. One result is, in Chapter 9, their introduction of an economic concept of an ordinal value, commensurate with the ontological insights derived from dynamical systems theory, and therefore radically-unlike those cardinal theories of value, whose advocates implicitly presume a sedentary, periodic, thoroughly-Euclidean conception of economic space. And then in Chapter 12, D&G provide an inaugural itemization of the questions and issues that such a heterodox economic project must confront when moving forward towards an economy of the war machine.

Our contribution is, first, is to guide our reader through these three Chapters (1, 9, 12). And second, to illustrate that the dromocratic model of economy outlined in *A Thousand Plateaus* is best actualized as a combination of (a) clusters of exotic options, and (b) a universal synthetic CDO, which we label a *H<sub>2</sub>Ofall economy*.

What model of economy do D&G propose in *TP*? A horizontally-propulsive economy, a nomadic distribution of economic flows, rhizomatically-arranged so that the pistons of difference are free to propound, proliferate, and pump away; yet without so much of the hierarchical-violence of fascicular capitalism, nor the veridical narcissisms of those arborescent economies of liberal equality, e.g. as found in classical versions of socialism or communism. For this reason our essay is the story of an economy of the war machine. Its wager is the nomadic distribution of economic space. It's an essay *On Dromocracy*.

(And in case you want to follow the trajectory of Parts II-IV with your copy of *TP*, here's the outline:)

*Part I. Introduction*

*Part II. Three Models of Economies in Chapter 1*

*Part III. The Economic Concept of Ordinal Value in Chapter 9*

*Part IV. The Elements of Nomadic Distribution in Chapter 12*

[1] We have just *colloquially* described a social instantiation of the phase transition to a state of deterministic chaos. We will, however, concern ourselves with questions involving economic transitions from low-parameter equilibrium to higher parameter equilibrium, marking the transition from a steady-state fix point attractor to a steady-state oscillation between two points now on a limit cycle attractor, and especially the economic significance of what Lorenz has shown (“The Problem of Deducing the Climate From the Governing Equations”, *Tellus* 16 (1964)) –namely, that beyond a certain point, chaos unfolds. The model of economy that is dromocracy is founded on a rhizomatic mode of distribution. The rhizomatic mode of distribution is, fundamentally speaking, deterministic chaos.

[2] *TP* pg. 3

[3] Deleuze's deep philosophical commitment to dynamical systems theory is a compelling and magnanimous but colossal topic. Here, we merely note a good enough definition (“Dynamical systems theory is the study of things that change, of phenomena that vary in time.” “Introduction to Dynamical Systems”, S.G. Eubank and J.D. Farmer, in *Introduction to Nonlinear Physics*, Lui Lam (ed.), Springer, 1996 pg. 58), followed by a pledge to our reader to pry open up some of its profundities throughout, when and where relevant analytic opportunities permit or demand it.

[4] *TP* pg. 3-4 {my emphasis}

[5] Navier-Stokes provides us with a brilliant mathematical description of the becoming that *is* deterministic chaos. We are here reminded of Von Neumann's account of the unstable complexities of this canonical equation in fluid dynamics –the Navier-Stokes equation– in which the inconstancy of the relationships exhibit a stable disorder of the highest aperiodic irregularity (what Gleick, who also cites Neumann, fittingly describes as 'walking through a maze whose walls rearrange themselves with each step you take.' (James Gleick, *Chaos: Making a New Science*, Penguin Books, 1987 pg. 24) –which is likely why our imaginary aforementioned party-goer was unable to 'get her bearings'. Von Neumann echoes our party-goer's anxiety over the experience with chaos: 'The character of [the Navier-Stokes] equation...changes simultaneously in all relevant respects: Both order and degree change. Hence bad mathematical difficulties must be expected.' John Von Neumann, "Recent Theories of Turbulence (1949), in *Collected Works*, ed. A.H. Taub, Pergamon Press, 1963, 6:437

[6] We will see that nothing could be further from the truth.

[7] *TP* pg. 4. In the spirit of our exercise, our reader may wish to reread this quote by substituting for the term "subject" the term "economy".

Taken from here

[<](#) [PREVIOUS](#) [NEXT](#) [→](#)

---

## META

[CONTACT](#)

[FORCE-INC/MILLE PLATEAUX](#)

[IMPRESSUM](#)

[DATENSCHUTZERKLÄRUNG](#)

## TAXONOMY

[CATEGORIES](#)

[TAGS](#)

[AUTHORS](#)

[ALL INPUT](#)

## SOCIAL

[FACEBOOK](#)

[INSTAGRAM](#)

[TWITTER](#)